

**ARTSY**

## Artsy will host the world's first Algorithm Auction, in partnership with Ruse Laboratories and benefitting Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

*Bidding opens March 18 on Artsy.net and ends March 27 during a live event at Cooper Hewitt*

New York, NY, March 18, 2015: **Artsy** ([artsy.net](http://artsy.net)) announces it will host the world's first Algorithm Auction, created by **Ruse Laboratories**, in a groundbreaking move to celebrate the art of pure code and designate algorithms as an exciting new category for collectors. Technologists have emerged as an undisputed creative force, sculpting imaginative, provocative algorithms that impact the daily social, economic, political, and aesthetic experiences of billions.

*“Cooper Hewitt has been working to increase its engagement with code and software as design objects through key acquisitions and we're delighted to be the beneficiary of this auction,”* said **Cara McCarty**, director of curatorial at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

Ruse Laboratories has selected notable works showcasing the aesthetic beauty and unique influence of algorithms for this first-of-its kind event, the Algorithm Auction, a benefit auction hosted online by Artsy. Bidding opens Wednesday, March 18 at [artsy.net/algorithm-auction](http://artsy.net/algorithm-auction) and will end during an event at **Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum** in New York the night of Friday, March 27, during #MuseumWeek. All proceeds from the auction will benefit Cooper Hewitt, which began acquiring code for its permanent collection in 2013 with the acquisition of the iPad music application Planetary, developed by Bloom Studio Inc., along with the underlying source code, which was freely released as part of the museum's open source initiatives.

*“Artsy is as firmly rooted in the technology world as the art world,”* said **Sebastian Cwilich**, president and COO of Artsy. *“Given the ever increasing importance of technology in our culture, we're excited to partner with Cooper Hewitt and Ruse Laboratories to highlight the creators of the algorithms that are having such profound impact on our lives.”*

The Algorithm Auction event at Cooper Hewitt will be complemented by the exhibition of the famous **Plimpton Cuneiform 322**, a Babylonian clay tablet, which is known for containing an example of Babylonian mathematics directly linked to the earliest known algorithms. The work

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on view is a facsimile from the original, c.1800 BC, on loan from the George Arthur Plimpton Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University. The historic Plimpton tablet will be exhibited alongside *Nigella (2015)*, a privilege-escalating polymorphic superworm for OSX authored by Rich Jones, a hacker and transparency activist.

**Benjamin Gleitzman**, co-founder of Ruse Laboratories, said, “*The most compelling algorithms--be they complex procedures whittled from pure code, carved into ancient clay, or elegantly expressed mathematically--have the power to challenge, transform, inspire, make us sad or fall in love. This is an ideal setting to celebrate their ever-growing creativity, influence and beauty.*”

The seven lots in the auction will feature **Archival Algorithms**, representing important moments in the history of the discipline, and **Living Algorithms**, created by elite developers working on the cutting edge of their field. Donors consist of influential technologists, academics, and other pioneers in the field of computer science. High bidders will win a range of artifacts and software licenses associated with these important algorithms. Highlights include:

- **Brian Kernighan**, *Hello, World (1978)* *Hello, World!* is perhaps the most iconic algorithm in computer science history. The words denote a basic programming exercise devised by Bell Labs technologist Brian Kernighan in 1978, which is today practiced by nearly every student around the world when learning to code.
- **Chris Coyne, Max Krohn, Sam Yagan, and Christian Rudder**, *OkCupid Compatibility Calculation (2003)* OKCupid is one of the world's most popular dating websites, and its proprietary matching algorithm has changed millions of lives. Before the OkCupid Compatibility Calculation, dating and matchmaking services primarily employed “relationship experts” who based their guidance on survey questions answered by self-described happy couples. This algorithm is still in use and has remained largely unchanged since it was written in 2003.
- **Hal Abelson**, *Turtle Geometry (1969)* On December 9, 2014, during Computer Science Education Week, President Obama became the first president to write a line of code. That algorithm, *moveForward(100)*, comes from the computing commands in the language Logo, developed in the 1960s as a teaching tool for children. Logo's best-remembered application was derived through “turtle graphics”—a system developed by MIT professor Hal Abelson in which students could either drive a simple robot or direct a cursor across a computer screen and draw graphic patterns. What sounds elementary today was, at the time, revolutionary.

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- **Anthony Ferraro**, *Hypothetical Beats (2015)* is a meta-algorithm that converts other algorithms into music. Ferraro, a Berkeley computer scientist turned Toro y Moi psych-rocker, devised Hypothetical Beats drawing on ideas first advanced by composers such as John Cage as well as later “generative” music composers like Brian Eno and Richard D. James (a.k.a. Aphex Twin).

### About Artsy

Artsy is the leading resource for learning about and collecting art from over 3,000 leading galleries, 400 museum and institutional partners, and 50 select art fairs and auctions. Artsy provides free access via its website ([artsy.net](http://artsy.net)) and iPhone app to 250,000 images of art and architecture by 40,000 artists, which includes the world's largest online database of contemporary art. Artsy's encyclopedic database spans historical works, such as the [Rosetta Stone](#) and [the Colosseum](#), to modern and contemporary works by artists such as [Pablo Picasso](#), [Willem de Kooning](#), [Richard Serra](#), [Lucien Smith](#), [Sarah Lucas](#), and [Cindy Sherman](#). Powered by The Art Genome Project, a classification system that maps the connections between artists and artworks, Artsy fosters new generations of art lovers, museum-goers, patrons, and collectors. Artsy is honored to supported the fundraising efforts of important art institutions through state-of-the-art web, mobile, and on-site auction technology.

### About Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. On Dec. 12, 2014, Cooper Hewitt opened in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion, which offers 60 percent more exhibition space to showcase one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence. Currently on view are 10 inaugural exhibitions and installations featuring more than 700 objects throughout four floors of the mansion, many of which draw from the museum's permanent collection of more than 210,000 objects that span 30 centuries. For the first time in the museum's history, the entire second floor is dedicated to showcasing the permanent collection through a variety of exhibitions. Visitors can experience a full range of new interactive capabilities, including the opportunity to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, draw their own designs in the Immersion Room and solve real-world design problems in the Process Lab. For further information, call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's website at [www.cooperhewitt.org](http://www.cooperhewitt.org) and follow the museum on [www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt](http://www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt), [www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt](http://www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt) and [www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt](http://www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt).

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